

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

A year of re-visioning

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

This year—2017—will bring changes for members of Mennonite Church Canada, a denominational entity to be reconfigured into a proposed structure of five area churches doing the work of a denominational centre in Winnipeg. It is uncharted territory, to say the least.

An Interim Council is already at work in fashioning the shape of this new entity, but if it is true, as one of its members, Peter Rempel, moderator of MC Manitoba, has declared, that “pastors tell me 90 percent of the people in the pews are disinterested in the process,” the Council is not only in new territory but is swimming upstream.

In meeting the formidable task, Keith Regehr, hired to lead the transition, cites the two tasks the Future Directions Task Force, at work now for three years, had as its goal, namely:

- **DOWNSIZE AND** streamline the present organizational structure.
- **DEVELOP A** renewed vision for the church today.

We respectfully posit that these two goals might be in reverse order. We read nowhere in Scripture what shape the community of faith should take, but the wisdom of the ancients does say that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). It seems that if the 90 percent are to get excited about any kind of restructuring, we need to first

hear the vision.

What does the Interim Council have in mind that inspires us, as congregations, as we face an uncertain future in the 21st century? Will it rally us to a renewed faith, to a new excitement about being a “believers church” in a post-Christendom world, to enthusiasm about sharing the “gospel of peace” with our neighbours and friends, to what it means to be a true Anabaptist 500 years in the making?



We submit that the first order of business should be a “re-visioning” of our Anabaptist-rooted faith that will require a lot of listening—to each other and to our neighbours. Have we lost sight of our primary calling to be followers of Jesus as he instructed us in the New Testament—a basic tenet of Anabaptists led by Menno Simons, who broke with the state church in the mid-16th century with a movement comprised of *godvruchtige* (“men and women who feared God”)?

Maybe a starting point for re-visioning is to reclaim what it means to be Anabaptist Christians in a modern age, re-visiting with zeal the theological themes that have given us purpose and identity. These themes, as articulated by our historians and theologians, are:

- **COMMUNITY:** A primary distinctive belief that in a spiritual sense the church is a disciplined, mutually caring community of persons (in contrast to individualized religiosity). The reconciled relationship

between individuals, made visible by their linkage to the church, is God-given—a product of grace. We are all “priests,” to borrow the parlance of the 16th century. The true Anabaptist believes that this reconciliation, this caring between individuals, belongs as much to salvation as does reconciliation to God. When applied to Mennonites, the term “community” is basically a religious concept with certain sociological implications.

- **DISCIPLESHIP:** This means that the essence of Christianity is following Jesus, that is, obeying his teaching and following his example. It is not primarily a matter of doctrine or confession statements or of the intellect; rather, a transformation of life. It demands an outward expression of the inner experience. Repentance must be “evidenced” by newness of behaviour.

- **PEACE:** Originally and still as a rejection of war and violence, peace is a principle tied to our identity as citizens of a heavenly kingdom. It involves justice, not in the legal sense, but rather deals with God’s justice for a fallen world. Just as Anabaptists believe that the church is not a power among powers, it is rather a power to confront centres of power in economics, in government and in religious establishments. We have aligned ourselves with a God who transcends national interests, a God interested in the salvation of the whole world, not just parts of it.

- **KINGDOM CITIZENS:** This belief holds us to a higher standard as “kingdom residents” and brings an inevitable tension between modern Anabaptists and other Christians, especially noticeable in our time with renewed efforts by evangelicals to identify nationalistic goals with the Christian religion. Anabaptists believe that government goals are almost always in tension with “kingdom goals,” no matter how similar they may appear in different eras and among friendly ideologies.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Teens from Kelsey Nowaczynski’s art classes at Edmonton’s Dan Knott Jr. High School paint a mountain scene mural on the walls of a therapy room at Southview Child Care, which is owned and operated by Edmonton First Mennonite Church. See story on page 14.

PHOTO: DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press





A GRIEF JOURNEY

‘I should ask Dad’

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

But my experience of my own grief, and that of others whom I have walked along with as friend or pastor, is that acceptance is a ‘place’ that comes and goes. . . . He will always be gone. I go on, but without him. But there is certainly more peace now than there was.

“I t was here somewhere,” I said to my son Allan. “The Boese canning factory was over here, and over there was an orchard where we lived in our trailer until about 1962. It was near the dormitory for the workers. At least I think. I should ask Dad.” (Dad was Peter Rogalsky. He and Leona [Unger] Rogalsky, my mom, had both worked for Boese in the late 1950s and early ‘60s.)

The reason my son and I were driving past the corner of Lake and Lakeshore in St. Catharines, Ont., at 1:30 in the morning of July 11, 2015, was that we had just come from Dad’s deathbed in the Niagara Health System’s St. Catharines site. There was no more asking Dad anything.

I had trained myself to plan things to ask Dad for our weekly Monday evening calls. A difficult relationship with Dad—coming from abuses in my childhood—meant that at first when I took up the task of calling him weekly the calls were short and difficult. I began gathering questions of family history and stories, so that the calls would be more grace filled. Now I had the habit, but no one to ask. Over the ensuing months I came to see that grief was more sharply focussed when the thought of asking Dad would come more often.

Grief as seen through the years

When I began studying to be a pastor in the late 1970s, the study of grief was new. Through the years, grief had been downplayed. Men, and often women, were expected to just go on with their day-to-day behaviour, keeping grief hidden and private.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s book *On Death and Dying* had been published a decade earlier. She was one of the

first to discuss the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The focus on steps of grief made it seem like grief was a linear process through which people passed, moving from one step to the next. It was possible to slide back into a previous stage, but this was seen as pathological. Someone who didn't just keep on moving forward was sick.

In my years of ministry, and by observing friends and family, people do sometimes get stuck in grief. Counselling from professional caregivers, as well as patience and much love from both professional and lay caregivers, can help a person resolve the complicated inner tangle that loss brings.

By the time I got to seminary in the late 1980s, we were seeing things in less staged, linear ways. People could cycle around through the various parts over and over again. Each person's grief would follow its own path, taking varying amounts of time. Differences in grieving in couples, and among friends and family, often brought disagreements and emotional turmoil in relationships, as one did not understand the other, or give the other room to journey through grief in a personal way or on a private schedule.

These differences are seen as a key reason that so many marriages run into difficulties after the death of a child. After my wife Annemarie and I experienced a miscarriage in the early 1980s, we had what I call "the hundred-kilometre fight." Driving from southern Ontario to Winnipeg about two months after the loss, we argued for more than an hour. Finally I stopped, and we figured out that I was not understanding her need to continue to grieve. Little did I know that I, too, was grieving, albeit more subconsciously. In retrospect, I now see many times in my

adult life when I grieved but wasn't aware of the emotions that I and those around me were experiencing. When I left my first pastorate I later realized that I had allowed all my houseplants to die from lack of care. I see that now as the depression part of grief at work.

"I should ask Dad."

Dad taught me a lot about grief in his last years. Mom died in 2008, at age 73, after spending seven years in a nursing home with a degenerative neurological condition. Dad grieved intensely after she died; for years, he often went to her graveside just to weep. As he grew nearer his own death from stage-four prostate cancer, he again began to talk about her and his grief at her loss.

By this time I had come to the conclusion that I neither needed, nor had the ability, to help him move on. It was better that I let him know that I heard him and was with him in his grief. I did notice, though, that when he got bad news about his condition, or the pain level was on the rise, he grieved more. All his losses and distresses became mixed together.

The components of grief

Rather than stages, I prefer to think about grief as components that can follow a progression or move around chaotically:

- **DENIAL IS** often the first part of grief. When I drive home from a death bed as a pastor, or from planning the funeral with the family, I often feel a disconnect between the reality of the death and the ongoing world around me. My "I should ask Dad" refrain was a minor form of denial as my subconscious was not connecting with the fact that Dad was gone to where I could no longer ask him anything and expect an answer. In severe cases, denial can become psychotic, with a mourner

really not believing that the deceased is really gone.

- **ANGER IS** another component. Men in western culture are especially prone to anger as an expression of grief. We tend to also externalize anxiety in the same way, lashing out at the world around us that won't stay put, that is constantly changing, and that is raising in us feelings that we have not been trained to process. I was quite upset with parts of Dad's funeral service when others decided to discard the scriptures I had chosen and inserted others.

- **PHYSICAL DISTRESS** can include psychosomatic symptoms like stomach aches, headaches, tiredness and muscle aches. This is connected with the physical symptoms of depression. I found that after Dad's death work that would have taken an hour took considerably longer. I couldn't get as much done; I lacked energy and concentration.

Shortly after Dad died, I went to interview a friend for an article and found that I couldn't find his place. When I finally arrived, he told me that someone had told him after his dad's death, to "give it a year" before your mental functions return to normal.

As I write this article I'm mourning the end of a good eight-year pastorate. It was time to leave, but now I feel fatigue and lack of focus again. With Dad, it took nine months before I began to feel normal in energy. Sadness and a desire to not have to process another's grief or pain were part of this time for me.

- **KÜBLER-ROSS'S BARGAINING** is a subconscious attempt to keep life the way it was. But grief is really about rebuilding ourselves and our lives without the

PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/ABSOLUTELY_FRENCHIE

person or things that we have lost, be it a job, a possession, a relationship or other precious object of our affection. We cannot bring the dead back. We cannot become young again. Some things are gone forever from our lives.

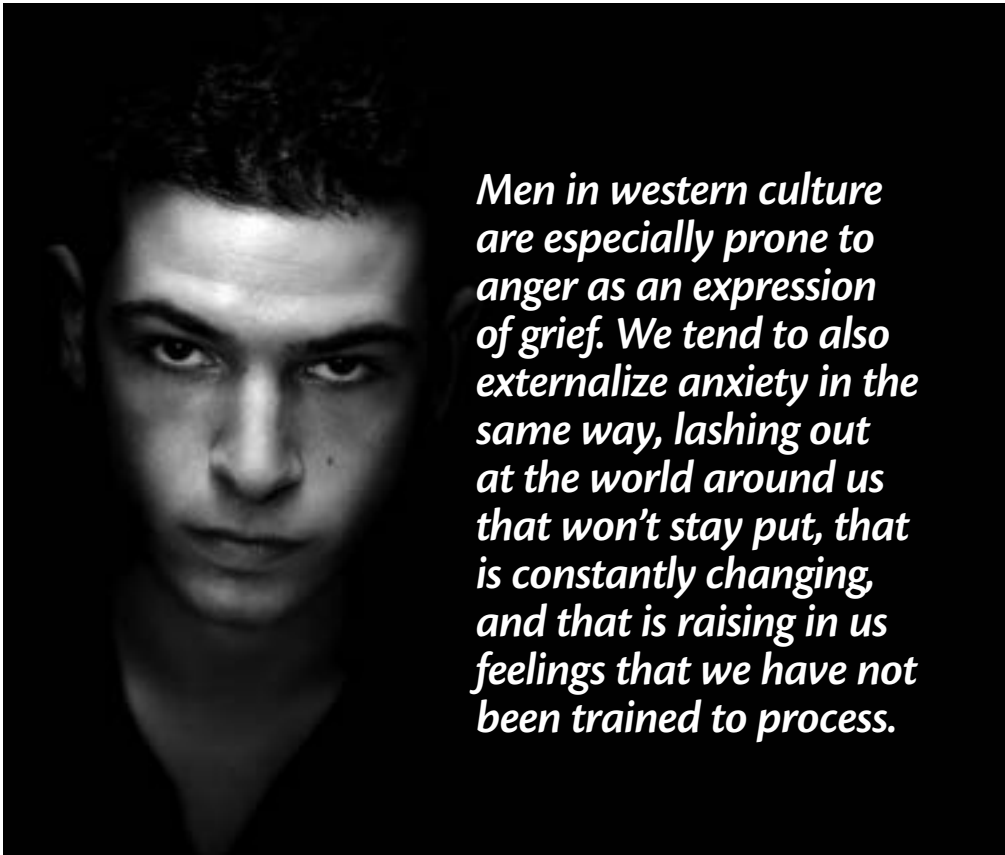
• **BUT ALL** of us crave central stability. In conscious and unconscious ways we bargain with ourselves, God and others to get things back to where they were. Slowly in the course of grief we create a new normal without that which is lost. This would be acceptance: “It’s going to be okay.” “I can’t fight it.” “I may as well prepare for it.”

Again Kübler-Ross, working in a modern scientific and ordered way of thinking, sees this as a stage, a destination. But my experience of my own grief, and that of others whom I have walked along with as friend or pastor, is that acceptance is a “place” that comes and goes. While March brought more energy and wholeness, Father’s Day, the June anniversary of Dad’s birth and the July anniversary of his death all brought a return of sadness and other signs of grief. He will always be gone. I go on, but without him. But there is certainly more peace now than there was.

Aids along the journey

On this journey I was aided by some significant things and disciplines: the love and care of spouse, children, a granddaughter, friends and peers; the knowledge that this is a normal process that does have a path towards being re-centred and refocused; patience and gentleness with myself, knowing that this is what happens, that it is good and necessary; self-care—rest, food and drink, prayer, my spiritual director, a support group of peers, journalling; accepting others’ offers of listening, story, observation and contemplation, where I found God gentle and patient with me, sitting as I fumed, as I worried, as I grieved, without judgment or correction.

Grief is coming to terms with the new reality that, as I look at the evening glow of the sky, there is no one between me and it. I am now the one others see in silhouette as they ponder life . . . and death. ❧



Men in western culture are especially prone to anger as an expression of grief. We tend to also externalize anxiety in the same way, lashing out at the world around us that won’t stay put, that is constantly changing, and that is raising in us feelings that we have not been trained to process.

/// For discussion

1. What has been your experience of losing someone close to you? Have you seen other people grieve differently? How did your parents express grief? Is the grief process different if the loss comes after a prolonged physical decline or dementia?
2. Dave Rogalsky suggests that grief is less a process with consecutive steps, and more a journey that people follow on their own path and time. Have you experienced grief as a series of consecutive steps or a more chaotic path? Which of the components of grief ring true to your experience?
3. “Grief is really about rebuilding ourselves and our lives without the person or things that we have lost, be it a job, a possession, a relationship or other precious object of our affection,” Rogalsky writes. Do you agree? Why might some people have a more challenging time rebuilding their lives than others?
4. Some Mennonite groups wear black for months to express mourning. Can you imagine yourself wearing an outward sign of mourning? Rogalsky lists a number of aids that he found helpful along his grief journey. What have you found to be helpful or unhelpful in processing your grief?

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY AND BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, **to be kept to 300 words or less**, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. In light of the many recent letters on the topic of sexuality, we will edit any letter on this topic to a paragraph and post the rest online at www.canadian-mennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ 'A timely rebuke' to MC B.C.'s 'professional' church leaders

RE: "NO MORE closed doors" editorial, Nov. 7, 2016, page 2.

Dick Benner hit the nail on the head with that timely rebuke! His emphasis on the fellowship grappling with issues as they emerge lies at the heart of community building. True leadership, in its many forms and from various sources, is resident with the fellowship, and does not necessarily emerge from the "leader designate." The process of grappling should be the role of every member; hence the need for openness and transparency. I have long felt that we have strayed from doing that essential "building" by hiring "professional" leaders who will do the heavy lifting for the fellowship. This reduces the average congregant to a "going to church on Sunday—I'm too busy for more than that" type of church member.

FRED WIELER, OAKVILLE, ONT.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Hope across generations

CALVIN QUAN

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40: 30-31).

In my new role as moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, I've been privileged to meet people of all ages who make up our church family.

At our delegate assembly in Saskatoon last July, young families were a rare but welcome sight. On the surface, the unfamiliar face on the stage (mine), and the beckoning of an infant's cry seemed an unlikely intersection at which to decide weighty church matters.

But something struck me when I saw a young pastor making his way from a floor microphone with a toddler in tow. Could God be at work in our midst? Could God's purposes be accomplished in the distracted lives and over-extended schedules of young parents?

In the fall, I had the privilege of



attending the Emerging Voices Initiative (EVI) workshop in Toronto. One of the young adults hosting the event said they had devoted their reading week to lead the cross-country tour to gather input into the future of our national church family. I marvelled, recalling how I spent my reading week at her age. With limited resources, she explained how EVI used technology to connect, unite, organize and mobilize young voices across five time zones.

Their message? "We are passionate about our future together!" Out of fear and despair that young voices would be left out of our Future Directions process, EVI has become a voice for positive change. As a much younger generation, they know what it means to be on the margins. In a very short time, EVI has become a strong advocate for other

marginalized voices along their journey. That's incredibly hopeful to me.

Our November fall leadership assembly is when moderators and executive staff meet from all the area churches across Canada. It was a gift and inspiration to work closely with older and experienced leaders who are just as passionate about our church's future as EVI. I'm humbled by their steady commitment and generosity. Many are volunteers serving during a challenging time of transition.

I see Jesus often showing up in our vulnerability, when we choose to make difficult choices out of faith. Jesus' choice of disciples was subversive. He challenged the popular notion of what it takes to build a winning team.

From young pastors with toddlers, to the EVI group, to our elders, I am reminded that Jesus built his church on the faith of people on the margins. At a time when emerging leaders with youth and drive bring a fresh vitality, often working under resource constraints, we're blessed by the wisdom, time and resources that experienced leaders give to sustain and broaden the mission of the church.

What a wonderful legacy of love and generosity to generations of faith that follow.

✉ Biblical precedents cited for closed church meetings

RE: “NO MORE closed doors” editorial, Nov. 7, page 2.

Is it appropriate to compare “transparency” in the church with government? We do uphold the ideal of transparency, but there are times we need to trust

our leaders, one another and the Holy Spirit.

The reason given for the press not being invited could be valid. Do we look at precedent? The apostles met behind locked closed doors to select Judas’ successor. The Jerusalem council reported on in Acts was seemingly only attended by apostles and elders.

It is my understanding, from talking to our Mennonite Church B.C. executive minister, that there

FAMILY TIES

Going home

MELISSA MILLER

One of the sweetest phrases in the Bible, “*The Word became flesh and lived among us*” (John 1:14), is often heard at Christmas. With joy and gratitude, we celebrate the incarnation, God taking on human flesh in Jesus, and making a home with us. Similarly, the vision of Revelation 21:3 proclaims in The Message: “*Look! Look! God has moved into the neighbourhood, making his home with men and women!*” Images of home—God making a home with and for us, and our making our home in God—abound in the Bible.

Home is central at Christmas. As I write this in mid-December, many of us are packing up children and gifts, preparing to drive or fly long distances to go home and be with family. Others are stocking refrigerators and setting up beds to receive returning sons and daughters. Home is a little word that occupies a big space in our hearts.

Home is, we hope, a place of belonging, connection, security and happiness. God’s willingness to make a home with us means the Divine is always present, as close as our neighbours. God’s willingness to make a home for us means we are never alone or without shelter.

I had an unusual experience this past fall. After 40 years of living away from home, I returned to the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania where I was

raised, and where most of my extended family lives. For four months, my husband and I offered support to my aging mother, soaked up family visits and savoured the local delights. What a gift it has been!

I understand, and to some degree agree with, the maxim, “You can’t go home again.” I can’t return to being a teenager, or wipe out the experiences that have shaped my beliefs and thinking. I can’t avoid noticing and, to some extent, judging the differences between locals and myself. I can’t pick up with family members and friends as if I’ve always been here and will be physically present in the future.

Still, keeping those factors in mind, I am ever so thankful to be able to go home to the land of my birth. I am blessed to revisit a beautiful part of the world, with its many purple-blue mountains and

those who remember my departed loved ones. Going home feeds an inner yearning. All these experiences also make me mindful of those who have lost homes due to conflict, war or the fragmentation of mobility.

Homecoming has some tensions. Differences are highlighted. Familiar routines are upended. The displaced brother grumbles about losing his bed. The princess wants her breakfast toast just a certain way. Grandma might be too overwhelmed to feed the whole crew, even if she protests that she is completely capable and committed to the task. Political, religious or lifestyle differences might rub a little too closely.

Even so, we need a home, and we need to share it with others. We are designed to be home-seekers and home-makers. Whether we are the travellers or hosts this season, we are called to do our part



Home is a little word that occupies a big space in our hearts.

fertile valleys. I revel in the tastes: apple butter, red beet pickled eggs, venison steak, black walnut ice cream, to name a few. I delight in informal family visits, joining my sister to stroll around the duck pond, playing games with my nephew’s young children, receiving another bowl of vegetable soup at my mother’s table. I am grateful to encounter

with grace, flexibility and joy. Ultimately, we find our home in God, the source of being, from whom we came and to whom we return.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymts.net) has a passion for helping people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others.

was no contentious discussion or debate in this meeting. Pastors were seated in a circle and simply spoke in turn, as reported by Amy Dueckman in her “Finding a way to be together” article (Oct. 10, 2016, page 13).

I do question whether every MC Canada member needs to know what the pastors said. As Anabaptists, we do believe in a congregational decision-making model, our cherished “priesthood of all believers”

ideal. However, if all of that discussion were public, there might be a risk of unnecessary fallout because of readers’ biases, previous feelings, or opinions toward certain pastors or congregations, which would not be good for trust and unity. If congregations and their leaders wish to share their experiences with other congregations and leaders, that might better be a mutual

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Generosity superheroes

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

Superhero movies are all the rage. One website says it is the most popular movie genre around. We all want someone to put things right in turbulent times. Even Lego Batman might do.

When we feel like things are spinning out of our control, we tend to hold on tighter to what we have. What happened to the right always prevailing, we ask? Oh, to have heroes put things back in order the way we expect them to be.

It is surprising how many times our expectation of the order of things is upended by the stories in the Bible. There we find unexpected superheroes like shepherds and widows, the vulnerable people whose names are not recorded.

In one of these stories, we find the prophet Elijah on the lam during a drought he predicted to King Ahab. Spoiler alert: Elijah is not the superhero of this story.



With God’s prodding, Elijah has travelled to enemy territory and encounters a widow on the outskirts of the town of Zarephath (cue the melodramatic music). Elijah calls out to the widow for a drink of water. “Oh, and please, a piece of bread.” At the request for bread, the widow, obligated by the hospitality codes of her culture to do as Elijah asks, stands up to him. “Are you crazy?” she asks loudly (loosely translated). In no uncertain words, she tells Elijah that she is just out gathering a

few sticks to make a small fire over which she will cook up her last handful of flour with the last of her oil, after which she expects she and her son will starve.

“Don’t be afraid,” Elijah tells her. “If you do this for me first, God promises there will be enough.” Then the true superhero of the story is revealed: The widow risks everything to be generous to a stranger and finds there is enough for the days to come. (You can read the whole story in I Kings 17).

At Abundance Canada, we work with many contemporary superheroes who act in generous ways that don’t necessarily conform to what is expected. They take “giving risks” that show their trust in God, who desires enough for all.

*‘Dear God, thank you for all the blessings you have given me. I don’t remember what they are, but you do.’
(Paula Dyck)*

John R. and Paula Dyck come to mind. While a farmer and businessman, John R. provided unpaid leadership to the fledgling organization that became Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). Together John R. and Paula expressed their generosity by donating earnings from their assets to support leadership development projects in the church.

When John R. succumbed too young to cancer, Paula continued their shared generosity legacy by establishing

an endowment fund at MFC (now Abundance Canada) even while continuing to donate earnings from their assets. Paula, at 103 years old, was overheard by her daughter Velma while praying: “Dear God, thank you for all the blessings you have given me. I don’t remember what they are, but you do.”

The Dycks are generosity superheroes, not because of the amounts they have given away, but because they risked incredible trust in a God who provides enough for all.

Albert Schweitzer once said, “Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.” Are there generosity superheroes whose example has influenced you to live more generously? Every risk we take for generosity can expand our own potential to be an

unexpected superhero and example to others. Let us help you discover the generosity superhero inside of you.

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada serving generous people in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest Abundance office or visit abundance.ca.

(Continued from page 9)

decision between those bodies.

I am not sure that barring the opinions and views of every pastor and congregation member is necessarily what MC Canada had in mind in a resolution that stated, “We recommend that MC Canada and area churches develop ways to hear one another around the implementation of this recommendation.”

LORNE BRANDT, RICHMOND, B.C.

✉ MC Canada should retract BDS resolution and apologize to Israel

IT WAS WITH sadness and dismay that I read and heard about the boycott-divestment-sanctions (BDS) resolution against Israel that was passed at Assembly 2016 last July in Saskatoon.

Apparently, the resolution was formulated because Arab Christian farmers had complained to Bethlehem Bible College people that the Israeli Water Authority had not supplied sufficient water when it was desperately needed.

To get a clearer picture of the situation, I contacted a Messianic Jewish friend on Mount Carmel. His response: “There has to be a good reason for the water not being supplied.” I also checked some news sources. Amira Hass, a left-wing Jewish author and journalist, wrote on June 21, 2016: “Israel says an intense heat wave combined with Palestinian Water Authority’s refusal to approve additional infrastructure had led to old and limited pipes being unable to transfer all the water needed.”

The water authority was responsible, not Israel. Moreover, the water authority does not always pay its utility bills. Israel has forgiven these debts a number of times.

The resolution should be retracted, with apologies extended to Israel.

A better resolution would have been: “We, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, strongly urge the Palestinian Authority to stop inciting violence—stabbing, shooting, vehicle ramming, etc.—against Israeli people; allow Jewish people to pray on the Temple Mount without being stoned or harassed; and remove all false information and hate-filled anti-Jewish language from their school textbooks.”

BDS harms Palestinians just as much as Israelis. One SodaStream factory had to close, and several hundred Palestinians lost their jobs.

Why is Bethlehem Bible College still in that town when most of the Christians have been driven out? Is it because of its well-known anti-Israel rhetoric?

ANDREW SAWATZKY, CALGARY, ALTA.

✉ Theology is a determinant in the rise—or fall—of the church

ONE HAS TO wonder how Mennonite Church Canada will absorb “Theology matters,” the title of a recent study that links patterns of church growth and decline to the kind of theology on offer in individual congregations.

Although the study’s authors surveyed only Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United churches in Ontario, their findings may give MC Canada pause as it authorizes its own congregations to unmoor themselves, should they see fit, from those pillars of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* deemed no longer compatible with a socially progressive agenda.

Such an agenda—what one might designate as the new gospel of social justice—is the principal cause, as the study’s authors point out, for widespread decline in church membership and attendance, even as more scripturally grounded and theologically conservative churches continue to add members, seemingly despite their stubborn biblical literalism.

For those who find in the Bible “*the words of eternal life*” (John 6:68), such research cannot be surprising. Indeed, they may long have wondered why anyone would surrender the salvific gospel of Christ—and I mean here the uncomfortable gospel that confronts us with the language of sin, judgment and repentance—to a revisionist theology that bends to the ever-shifting winds of our culture.

I suppose the question that MC Canada and its member congregations must ask themselves in this time of theological rift is: What will satisfy the deep yearnings of an eternal soul? Is it the gospel of social justice, liberated from any scriptural, credal or confessional restraints, or is it the good news of a crucified and risen Saviour who delivers us from ourselves into the hands of God the Father?

The answer to this question obviously dictates far more than church membership numbers, but if that is the issue that finally prompts a serious assessment of Mennonite theology, then so be it.

For more on “Theology matters,” visit bit.ly/theology-matters.

MARKUS POETZSCH,
WATERLOO, ONT.



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 3)

TROY WATSON



One of the most overlooked fruits borne in the life of someone who genuinely follows the way of Jesus and lives in the Spirit, is wisdom. If we put into practice what Jesus teaches us, we will become increasingly wise.

Wisdom was central to Jesus' identity, even as a child. The only passage of Scripture about Jesus' early years is found in Luke 2:40-52. Luke begins this childhood vignette saying, "*The child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.*" Then Luke tells a story, the only story the gospels record about Jesus as an adolescent.

The story recounts the time Jesus' parents unintentionally left him at the temple for three days. He was 12 years old. Over the course of those three days Jesus engaged in dialogue with some of the wisest teachers and scholars in Jerusalem, and everyone who heard the tween sensation named Jesus was astonished at his wisdom and understanding.

And that's it. That story is the only glimpse we get into Jesus' childhood. Then Luke wraps up this story and Jesus' entire adolescence and young adulthood by saying, "*and Jesus grew in wisdom and stature*" (Luke 2:52). From beginning to end, the only Scripture passage to report on Jesus' upbringing focusses on his increasing and expanding wisdom.

The next time we encounter Jesus in the gospels he is an adult, a nomadic rabbi rising in influence and fame throughout Galilee for his miraculous power and wisdom. He was perceived by his own disciples as primarily a wisdom teacher—or sage—with healing power. Throughout the gospels, Jesus is called "rabbi" or "teacher"

more than any other name or title. His teaching style, parables, rhetoric and aphorisms—provocative, truth-packed one-liners—clearly flow from the ancient Jewish wisdom tradition.

The two major differences that seem to distinguish Jesus from other wisdom teachers at the time were:

- **HE TAUGHT** with a unique confidence and authority.
- **HE ROUTINELY** communicated an alternative or subversive kind of wisdom

Of course, Jesus was not only a wisdom teacher. He was a prophet, healer, miracle worker, activist and revolutionary. For Christians, Jesus is also Messiah, Saviour, Prince of Peace and Son of God.

that turned conventional wisdom on its head.

Of course, Jesus was not only a wisdom teacher. He was a prophet, healer, miracle worker, activist and revolutionary. For Christians, Jesus is also Messiah, Saviour, Prince of Peace and Son of God. As important as these other aspects of Jesus' identity are, they unfortunately too often overshadow and even undermine the fact that one of Jesus' primary roles on earth was "rabbi" or "teacher," and his primary teaching goal was to disciple people in the way of divine wisdom. As he tells his disciples, "*Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be . . . wise*" (Matthew 7:24). He even commands us to "*be wise*" in Matthew 10:16.

There is an even deeper metaphysical

connection between Jesus and divine wisdom in the New Testament. He is not just a wisdom teacher; he is divine wisdom personified. The Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Logos or Word of God. The parallels between John's description of the Word and the description of Wisdom in Jewish wisdom literature are too obvious to ignore. If you've never made this connection before, read John 1 and Proverbs 8.

Here are some of the parallels between the wisdom tradition's understanding of Wisdom and John's understanding of Christ as the Logos or Word:

- **BOTH WISDOM** and the Word are with God from the beginning (John 1:1-2; Proverbs 8:22-23; Wisdom 6:22; Sirach 24:9).
- **BOTH MANIFEST** God's glory (John 1:14; Wisdom 7:25)
- **BOTH GIVE** light and life (John 1:4-5, 9; Wisdom 7:26; Proverbs 3:18).
- **BOTH DESCEND** from heaven to impart God's truth (John 1:14, 17-18; Sirach 24:8-11; Baruch 3:37; Wisdom 9:9-10).

• **BOTH ARE** not well received by humanity (John 1:11; Proverbs 1:24-27; I Enoch 42).

• **THE INFLUENCE** of the Jewish wisdom tradition on the first-century Christian understanding of Christ is apparent throughout the New Testament. See Hebrews 1, for example. Paul explicitly calls Jesus "the Wisdom of God" in I Corinthians 1:24.

Jesus is divine wisdom. The way of Jesus is the way of wisdom. To be Christ-like is to grow in wisdom. This is good news because, looking at the current state of our world, the need for wisdom has never been greater or more urgent. ☘

Troy Watson (troydw@gmail.com) is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

Seeking diversity or saying yes

LEE DYCK AND CALVIN QUAN

A previous post on the Interim Council website, “Leadership for the transition of churches in Mennonite Church Canada” (bit.ly/leadership-transition) has generated robust conversation on the theme of gender and ethnic diversity in the leadership structures of our national and area church bodies.

Commenters rightly pointed out that of the nine people on the Interim Council, seven are middle-aged white men. And of seven members of the Executive Staff group, six are middle-aged white men. Readers responded with lament and frustration. The middle-aged white men in these two groups share these concerns. They, too, wish for greater diversity. They are keenly aware that valuable voices are not present.

It’s important to read between the lines of expressed emotions. There are long-standing systems, whether deliberate, by default or by happenstance, that result in a diversity imbalance in leadership. What is true at the area and national church levels can be even more challenging at the congregational level, where nominating and gift-discernment committees face the task of finding “yes-sayers” among an even smaller and often less diverse pool of candidates. This is not a defensive



Lee Dyck: ‘For me, being called as moderator for Mennonite Church British Columbia required time to pray and then responding, which values the community part of who we are as Mennonites.’



Calvin Quan: ‘I’m grateful for the calling to serve as moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, alongside other leaders committed to the work of transition. I’m in a position of both learning and teaching what diversity actually means in church structures. I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t feel called to this task.’

are most like us. But until we get to better know our church family of non-white, “other” white, economically marginalized, and differently gendered brothers and sisters, we will always struggle to find names of candidates for consideration.

- **BE INTENTIONAL.** It’s easy to default to calling on people we already know when recommending candidates for leadership. Consider those on the edges.
- **GET COMFORTABLE** with risk. There is both promise and peril in the “unknown” candidate. Embrace both with wisdom and grace.
- **PARTICIPATE.** WHEN calls for leadership candidates surface on your radar, be

statement. It is simply a fact. What we read between the lines is that people are yearning for changes to the traditions and systems that result in the predominance of middle-aged white men in leadership. How can we change the system so that we can find a greater diversity of expression in our leadership at every level of the church? We offer a few suggestions. Like Jesus:

- **START WITH** relationships. It’s a natural human tendency to affiliate with those who
- **DISCERN CAREFULLY** when calling and considering candidates. Diversity done poorly makes it artificial. Strive for meaningful authenticity. Tokenism is not helpful.
- **SAY YES.** When you receive a phone call or a shoulder tap, it means that someone has recommended you and recognized your gifts. It could also mean that God is calling you. Prayerfully discern your response.
- **RESPECT AND** bless those who respond to God’s call and the discernment of the body as they serve in positions of leadership. Many are making great sacrifices to serve.
- **ENGAGE LEADERS** with creative, constructive and balanced critique. Offering harsh criticism without a problem-solving attitude can discourage leaders from continuing their service in the future, creating a dearth of future leaders.
- **WHAT OTHER** suggestions might you add to this list? What would you do to change the system that selects our leaders?

willing to volunteer, or freely recommend names of persons to consider.

- **BE INTENTIONAL.** It’s easy to default to calling on people we already know when recommending candidates for leadership. Consider those on the edges.
- **GET COMFORTABLE** with risk. There is both promise and peril in the “unknown” candidate. Embrace both with wisdom and grace.
- **PARTICIPATE.** WHEN calls for leadership candidates surface on your radar, be

As transition leaders, we have together named diversity as a top criterion in regards to the new structures and future directions at the national and area church levels. %

Written on behalf of the Interim Council by Lee Dyck, moderator of MC B.C., and Calvin Quan, moderator of MC Canada. The Interim Council, which is composed of the five area church moderators, and the moderator and vice-moderator of MC Canada, is guiding the area and national churches through a period of change as it embraces a new covenant relationship. Terms of reference for volunteer positions on the Listening Group and the Working Groups can be found at futuredirectionsmc.ca.



/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bezooyen—Jude Cameron (b. Oct. 20, 2016), to Bethany and Tyler Bezooyen, First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Boldt—Uma Mirabel (b. Nov. 16, 2016), to Keith Boldt and Merel Kriegsman, Osler Mennonite, Sask., in Germany.

Froese Chacon—Dominic (b. Nov. 26, 2016), to Olaya Chacon Gonzalez and L. Rodrigo Froese Froese, First Mennonite, Calgary.

Steiner-Koop—Eliza Annette (b. Nov. 9, 2016), to Rebecca Steiner and Pierre-Joël Koop, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Thiessen—Billie Rose (Nov. 7, 2016), to Lisa McBride and Daniel Thiessen, First Mennonite, Calgary.

Tiessen—Larissa Claire (b. Nov. 29, 2016) to Gregory and Amanda Tiessen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Craig Dickinson—Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Nov. 27, 2016.

Matthew Froese—Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 13, 2016.

Marriages

Bryon/Jackson—Eva (Kroeker) Bryon (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Brian Jackson, Nov. 19, 2016.

Deaths

Buhr—Lorne Richard, 74 (b. March 25, 1942; d. Oct. 2, 2016), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Contant—Laurena Kathryn (nee Laurie Dyck), 51 (b. May 2, 1965; d. June 26, 2016), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Ens—Henry, 88 (b. July 31, 1928; d. Nov. 8, 2016), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Klassen—Peter, 90 (b. April 20, 1926; d. Nov. 15, 2016), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Lichti—Ken, 81 (b. June 2, 1935; d. Nov. 25, 2016), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Loeppky—John, 86 (b. April 29, 1930; d. Nov. 28, 2016), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Neufeld—Katherine (nee Janzen), 98 (b. Sept. 25, 1918; d. Nov. 19, 2016), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Nickels—Pauline, 78 (b. Nov. 14, 1938; d. July 19, 2016), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Schott—Clifford, 89 (b. Nov. 13, 1927; d. Dec. 4, 2016), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Schwartzentruber—Kenneth, 88 (b. April 30, 1928; d. Nov. 17, 2016), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Warkentin—David, 85 (b. Nov. 1, 1930; d. Oct. 21, 2016), Glenlea Mennonite, Man.

Wiebe—Reinhard, 90 (b. March 29, 1926; d. Dec. 1, 2016), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Zehr—Roy, 92 (b. Aug. 17, 1924; d. Dec. 1, 2016), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

A moment from yesterday



George Wiebe conducts the Canadian Mennonite Bible College choir in an impromptu song on a B.C. ferry while on tour in May 1966. The choir gave 24 performances in 17 days, and 39 of the 43 singers also spoke at these events. The tour was an important community-building event for the choir members, but also for the school and supporting congregations. In spite of a minor vehicle accident, all had an enjoyable time. Photographer Rudy Regehr donated his photos to the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, and with the help of an index, information about this photo comes from a report in the July 5, 1966, issue of *The Canadian Mennonite*. Archives provide many tools and resources that help us understand past events.

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Rudy Regehr / Mennonite Heritage Centre



archives.mhsc.ca

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

COVER STORY

Painting for community

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON

In an ironic coincidence, ugly graffiti was sprayed on the outside wall of Edmonton First Mennonite Church the same day that teenagers from a local junior-high school painted a beautiful mural on walls inside the church late last year.

“We got to paint on a wall!” exclaimed an enthusiastic student from Kelsey Nowaczynski’s Grade 8/9 art class from Dan Knott Jr. High School. The students painted a mountain scene on the walls around a small climbing area in the therapy room of Southview Child Care. Southview is a public daycare centre that is owned and operated by First Mennonite, and which integrates children with special needs into its community.



Natalie Buhr, left, Kyra Drew and Ivy Ngo were excited to come back to Southview Child Care, their former daycare centre, to paint a mountain scene mural on the walls of a therapy room. To create the mural, their art class at Dan Knott Jr. High School partnered with Southview, which is owned and operated by Edmonton First Mennonite Church.

Nowaczynski’s pre-school-aged son attends Southview while she teaches art classes at Dan Knott. The search for the right care for Nowaczynski’s son was challenging. After a difficult year, they found a good fit at Southview. “It’s an amazing

daycare,” she said. “We’ve been through three day homes and some daycares [before Southview]. He is so happy to be here.”

As part of her teaching, Nowaczynski looks outside the school walls for opportunities for her students to use art to enhance lives. “I like getting the kids out into the community and giving them the opportunity to give back,” she said.

This particular art field trip was extra special, not only because Nowaczynski’s son is currently a part of the daycare community, but because some of her art students have good memories of Southview.

The opportunity to partner Dan Knott School with First Mennonite Church and Southview Child Care brought three “alumni” home to their former daycare. Natalie Buhr, Kyra Drew and Ivy Ngo all attended Southview as toddlers and for Kindergarten. Natalie also regularly attends First Mennonite with her family.

The graffiti on the outside of the church building will soon be covered over and forgotten, the artist unknown and apart from the community. The mural on the inside walls, however, will be the stuff of good memories and ongoing benefit for years to come. ❧



Teens from Kelsey Nowaczynski’s art classes at Edmonton’s Dan Knott Jr. High School painted a mountain scene mural on the walls of a therapy room at Southview Child Care, which is owned and operated by Edmonton First Mennonite Church.

Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **CARRIE MARTENS** was ordained at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener on Oct. 23, 2016. From 2006 to 2008 she served at North Kildonan Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. She has a bachelor's degree in biblical and theological studies and a minor in psychology from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) (2002-06) in Winnipeg, and a master of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind. (2008-11). She serves half-time at Stirling as pastor of faith formation and does content editing for the Shine curriculum, as well as leading workshops.



• **ALICIA BUHLER** was licensed toward ordination at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener on Oct. 23, 2016. She has a master of divinity degree in pastoral care and counselling from AMBS, and a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and biblical and theological studies from CMU. Her ministry is outside the church and involves meeting with individuals for spiritual care, serving as a volunteer on the on-call spiritual care team at Grand River Hospital. She is a deacon at Stirling, and authored the *Minister's Handbook of Reproductive Loss*. She has completed both the foundational and practicum levels of supervised training in Gestalt Pastoral Care and is also an instructor of the Anabaptist Learning Workshop.



• **JESSICA REESOR REMPEL** was licensed toward ordination at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church on Oct. 23, 2016. She has a bachelor of arts degree in peace and conflict studies from Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., and a master of divinity degree from Emmanuel College at the Toronto School of Theology, and she completed pastoral internships at Parkwood Mennonite Home in Waterloo and at Stirling Avenue Mennonite. Her call is to empower people to make meaning and find God in their lives wherever they are, working outside the church with Pastors in Exile, through which she seeks to connect those on the fringes of traditional church with vibrant faith experiences inside and outside of church walls.



• **LEN REMPEL** began as quarter-time pastor of St. Agatha Mennonite Church, west of Waterloo, on Oct. 1, 2016. His education includes bachelor's degrees in mathematics and education, and he has taken courses at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and through Conrad Grebel University College's master of theological studies program. Most of his working career has been in accounting, including eight years with Shoppers Drug Mart, 11 with Ten Thousand Villages, and more than five years with Mennonite World Conference (MWC). He will continue his role with MWC, although with reduced hours. His main responsibilities at St. Agatha centre on worship and preaching, along with pastoral care.



• **MICHELE RAE RIZOLI** was ordained at Toronto United Mennonite Church on Oct. 30, 2016; the church has been her home since returning to Canada from Brazil in 1992. She graduated with a master of divinity degree from Emmanuel College at the Toronto School of Theology in 2010. She has been associate pastor at Toronto United Mennonite since August 2013 and previously worked with the ecumenical chaplaincy at the University of Toronto. She has also done copy editing for MennoMedia.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

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From behind the Iron Curtain

Russian Mennonite history told through letters

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Tales of families separated through war and later reunited through letters 60 years ago were featured at the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.'s fall fundraiser. The program, held at King Road Mennonite Brethren Church in Abbotsford on Nov. 13, 2016, was entitled "A small sign of life and love: Letters from the Soviet Union during the Khrushchev Thaw, 1956."

The Khrushchev Thaw, as explained by speaker Robert Martens, refers to the period beginning in the mid-1950s after the death of Josef Stalin, when repression and censorship in the former Soviet Union were eased under the party chairmanship of Nikita Khrushchev.

Mennonites who had been separated through war and the Stalinist regime began to write to relatives in North America, when sending mail to other countries was no longer against the law. "Mennonites bore the brunt of many of Stalin's repressions," said Martens. Canadian Mennonite

German newspapers then began to carry print listings of people from the Soviet Union looking for their relatives in Canada, which led eventually to reunions of family members.

Louise Bergen Price of Abbotsford spoke on the topic, "We're here because of you, but it's not your fault," telling of her grandparents' experiences of war, famine and arrests.

Ruth Derksen Siemens explained sev-

eral themes that came out of the first letters sent, including searching for family members, disrupted marriages, masked messages through Scripture, and improved living conditions.



Louise Bergen Price tells stories of her grandmother.

Interspersed throughout the program were congregational hymns, many in German, and solos by Ian Funk. The afternoon ended with a traditional faspas meal.

The Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. is committed to fostering awareness of Mennonite history and culture in the province, collecting and preserving valuable historical records, and sponsoring

Mennonites who had been separated through war and the Stalinist regime began to write to relatives in North America when sending mail to other countries was no longer against the law.

programs and events that communicate Mennonite history and culture. ❧



Those attending the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. sing German hymns together.

'Big tent thinking'

Diverse Anabaptists called to work together with MCC to address global needs

STORY AND PHOTO
BY RACHEL BERGEN

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG

Comparing Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to a big tent, Don Peters, the executive director of MCC Canada, described the organization as “the place where the Anabaptist community works and serves together,” at its annual general meeting in Winnipeg last fall.

However, the question on many people’s minds has been, “Can supporters stay under the tent together?” In this metaphorical tent there are many people with different backgrounds, gifts, challenges and perspectives.

MCC was formed 96 years ago as a cautious contract born of necessity between divergent, sometimes conflicting Mennonite groups, to help Ukrainian Mennonites caught in the aftermath of the First World War and in the midst of post-revolutionary Russia.

“The magnitude of the suffering and the urgent need for action compelled the groups to collaborate,” Peters quoted from *Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History* by Esther Epp-Tiessen.

In this way, these churches who make up MCC were—and still are—like a stalk of wheat, Mary Anne and Jon Isaak said during a worship session, as they asked participants to strip kernels of wheat from the stalk, grind them using a mortar and pestle, and contribute the flour to other ingredients to make bread.

“If we’re separate from each other, we do not serve our purpose to nourish and sustain one another,” Mary Anne said, referencing Romans 14 that participants used as the basis for a Bible study.

Although MCC has historically been an organization around which different groups have come together to nourish and



Mary Anne Isaak prepares communion elements during the evening worship session at MCC Canada's 2016 annual general meeting in Winnipeg last fall.

sustain others, both the church and MCC are experiencing shifts due to ideological and theological conflicts that threaten both institutions in their present form.

Peters cited MCC’s participation in inter-faith dialogue, its work in Palestine and Israel, and the ongoing conversation surrounding inclusion in the church of members who are in committed same-sex relationships as issues which “have the potential to fracture the Anabaptist body in Canada

and, potentially, to erode support for MCC.”

But “the reasons for MCC’s coming together still apply today,” Peters said, calling on leaders and members of these groups to put aside their differences for the greater good of humanity. “We want a commitment [from constituent churches] that the needs out there are so great, they compel us to work together to address them,” he added.

At the close of the day, participants were invited to share a message either for MCC or the churches regarding “big tent thinking.”

Several participants shared messages to the churches that make up MCC’s constituent base to embrace the diversity within. “We can work together with differences and our diversity can help us see things we wouldn’t see,” said MCC Alberta board member Kris Peters.

Other participants called on the churches to persevere in their work with MCC, and to recognize MCC is not meant to be a faith leader or to mediate issues of theology, but to continue to carry out its relief, development and peace work. ❧

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PHOTO BY LIESA UNGER



Worship at a congregation of the Kenya Mennonite Church.

The next 500 years of Anabaptism

Mennonite World Conference
BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Tremendous change rocked the western church 500 years ago, as successive groups discovered new things about God through Scripture and separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church.

Renewal 2027 is a framework for a 10-year series of events within the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) global family, commemorating Anabaptism's role in that period of cultural and religious change called the Reformation.

"Renewal 2027 will be a celebration of a historical tradition that has now found expression in many different cultural settings around the world," says John Roth, secretary of the MWC Faith and Life Commission and a Renewal 2027 organizer. "We hope that the events will strengthen our identity by engaging conversations—especially with young people, lay church members and ecumenical friends—that reflect on what it means to be Anabaptist today in the global church, while also being in fellowship with the broader Christian church."

Each year, an event will take place in a different region, following the locations of

Executive Committee and General Council meetings and assemblies. A theme for worship, singing and discussion will be chosen in conversation with global partners. Local planning committees will infuse each event with the nuances of their own culture, tradition and history. Speakers from all five regions, along with ecumenical guests, will represent the global nature of Anabaptist belief and Christian witness in the world today.

The first event, "Transformed by the Word: Reading the Bible in Anabaptist perspectives," is slated for Feb. 12 in Augsburg, Germany, coinciding with the year and country of the start of the Reformation.

The next year's Renewal 2027 event, focussed on the Holy Spirit, will take place in Kenya alongside the 2018 General Council meeting.

Renewal 2027 occurs in the context of worldwide recognition of the Reformation. Ecumenical events like "Together in hope," held last October and attended by MWC general secretary César García, celebrate fellowship between formerly

/// Briefly noted

Church plant parts company with area, national churches

L'Essentiel, listed as a "church plant" in the Mennonite Church Canada directory, has severed all ties with the denomination and MC Eastern Canada. A letter from Richard Loughheed, on behalf of the L'Essentiel church council, said the decision has to do with "the decisions surrounding Being a Faithful Church (BFC) and a previous absence of church action or teaching related to same-sex practice. . . . How can Anabaptists approve the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* that underlines a position of what is God's will in sexuality, and then refuse to teach it or enforce it—in effect to allow everyone to experiment and to do what seems right in their own eyes? . . . Since L'Essentiel has been dual-affiliated, we will remain with the Mennonite Brethren. This, unfortunately, ends the worthy experiment of dual affiliation in this area." David Martin, executive minister of MC Eastern Canada, responded to *Canadian Mennonite's* request for a comment: "L'Essentiel is a small church plant in Montreal that was exploring an affiliation with MC Eastern Canada. While the congregation had a working relationship with the MC Eastern Canada mission minister, it was not a formal member of MC Eastern Canada. MC Eastern Canada regrets that L'Essentiel has decided to conclude its exploration towards partnership with the MC Eastern Canada community of congregations, and wishes them well as they seek to be a witness to the Anabaptist faith in Montreal."

—BY ROSS W. MUIR

divided groups like Lutheran and Catholic communions.

Renewal 2027 commemorates the 500th anniversary of the *Schleitheim Confession* and the first Anabaptist mission conference, the Martyrs' Synod in Augsburg, and celebrates the globalization of Anabaptist-Mennonite churches, culminating with the 2027 MWC assembly. ///

New Ethiopian church emerges in Ottawa

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

OTTAWA, ONT.



The Oromo Christian Fellowship, which was established in 2004 and changed its name to Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa in 2010, has applied for emerging church status in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and expects to be received into fellowship in April.

The Oromo is the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. Many fled Ethiopia between the mid-1970s and late '80s, when living as Christians was forbidden and all foreign mission groups were banned by the Derg, a communist group that took power in a coup and ruled with a regime of terror. And a similar situation of oppression is occurring more recently.

Wondimu Senbeto, chair of the congregation's elders group, has been in Canada nine years. He says the church chose to join

MC Eastern Canada because "Mennonites fit us best." Because of the area church's focus on peaceful co-existence, with Christ as the source of that peace, the congregation wishes to join Mennonites in peace and evangelism. The church's sense of mission, as well as the content of its preaching and teaching, fit best within the Mennonite fold as it strives to bring the gospel to both Ethiopians and others.

He and Teso Felmina, vice-chair, who has been in Canada for 12 years, both fled Ethiopia and were in transit for many years before landing in Canada as refugees.

The congregation began as a bi-weekly fellowship, praying and studying the Bible together in homes. By 2010 it had outgrown houses and began to rent space at St. Martin's Anglican Church. Currently,



Wondimu Senbeto, left, chair of the Oromo Evangelical Church of Ottawa's elders group, and Teso Felmina, vice-chair.

meetings involve around 50 people, with more than half of them being adults.

The congregation has chosen to not hire a pastor for the time being; instead, the elders council and a deacons board run the church. Musical instruments have been bought to keep youth and young adults involved.

Felmina and Senbeto recognize that the next generation will be English-speaking and will need a partner like MC Eastern Canada.

They hope that their congregation will be steadfast in faith, tackling obstacles that keep them from following Christ. Spiritual growth and reaching others with the gospel are key goals, and they want to lead lives that are examples for others, so that they will want to come and follow Christ, too. They see that their youth have the potential to go around the world with the gospel.

At the same time, they hope the church grows in number, but not at the expense of spiritual strength. First, spiritual strength they say, and then numbers. Looking at their homeland and other places, they see the troubles involved in being followers of God in this world, but they are convinced that even in persecution God is with them. They trust in God.

Since 2011 the congregation has organized a yearly conference of Oromo-speaking congregations. ❧

/// Briefly noted

New Mennonite memorial unveiled

Mennonites interested in their history in tsarist Russia have a new historic marker. On Sept. 16, 2016, at the initiative of local Ukrainian historians and village officials, a bust of the influential Mennonite reformer, Johann Cornies, was unveiled at Sosnovka, the site of the Novoberdyansk Forest, Melitopol district, Zaporozhye region. The unveiling event, held on a local holiday honouring foresters, was proclaimed Johann Cornies Day. Several hundred local residents, village and state officials, and foreign guests watched as the new bust was unveiled by Harvey Dyck, emeritus history professor from Toronto, and Rita and Vladimir Dick, descendants of Johann Cornies from Germany. The monument was funded locally and with contributions from the International Mennonite Memorial Committee for the Former Soviet Union. Local authorities prepared the site, where a stele, crowned by a bust by sculptor Vladimir Parshin, was inscribed with the following words in Ukrainian, German and English: "As the most celebrated Russian Mennonite reformer of his time, Johann Cornies was instrumental in establishing the Berdiansk Forestry. He and his Mennonite community played a leading role in the settlement and modernization of southern Ukraine."

—BY ANNE KONRAD



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Making room for the politics of hope

Saskatoon elects first Mennonite mayor

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

SASKATOON

“I don’t know if it’s sunk in entirely, but it’s been a good experience so far.”

That’s Charlie Clark’s assessment of his first weeks as the new mayor of Saskatoon. He admits those weeks have “definitely been a whirlwind” but feels the city has welcomed him warmly to his new role.

Clark, who attends Osler Mennonite Church, won the Oct. 26, 2016, election, defeating Don Atchison, who had served as the city’s mayor for 13 years. Although new to the job, Clark is no stranger to municipal politics, having been a city councillor for 10 years.

With a background in mediation and conflict resolution, Clark was drawn to politics through the encouragement of friends and a desire to respond to what he saw as a politics of division. “There were a lot of issues that were creating a lot of tension,” he says. Those issues included relations between the city’s indigenous community and its police force, and debate over suburban development. “It was very ‘us versus them,’ the way the narrative was playing out,” he says. “Because I’d done work in mediation, I began to think that we need space for politics that doesn’t succumb to that really divisive thinking.”

A decade later, Clark felt that current issues—economic and environmental sustainability, maintaining a vital downtown core, meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse population—were not being addressed satisfactorily. And so he decided, again with much encouragement from others, to make a bid for the mayor’s job.

Clark sees his role as that of collaborator and team leader. He recognizes that relationship-building is a somewhat nebulous task but feels he is in a position to set a tone



Charlie Clark, Saskatoon’s recently elected mayor, stands next to a painting by his grandmother that now hangs in the mayor’s office.

of openness and inclusivity. “I believe we make the best decisions as communities when we actually take the time to listen to one another and find that common ground, as opposed to just letting stereotypes and fear guide decisions,” he says.

The recent U.S. election has shown that fear can be a powerful motivator, says Clark, who hopes, instead, to “try and motivate people based on hope,” giving the public “a transparent and honest assessment of what’s going on and what you think needs to be done, with some humility.”

Clark is candid about his membership at Osler Mennonite. He did not grow up in the church but became familiar with Mennonites when he attended Menno Simons College in Winnipeg. He married into the Mennonite community; his wife, Sarah Buhler, grew up in Osler. The couple

wanted their three young children to grow up knowing both their familial and faith heritage. “By going to Osler, we can connect our kids to four generations of [their] history,” he says, adding, “We wanted to make sure they developed a sense of values and an ethical framework to live their lives.”

He also sees value for himself in attending the church. “It’s a wonderful community,” he says. “I find that the theology and the values and the service work that happens in the community is a good grounding for me.”

Clark sees Osler Mennonite as “a courageous church” that hasn’t been afraid to take a stand on controversial issues and then move forward. “Being in politics, you can get pushed and pulled in a lot of different directions,” he says. “Being around people who are firm in their beliefs and values, and [who] act on them, is a good place to return to and spend time.”

Although Clark describes his faith as “a more private part of my life,” he nevertheless sees it as playing a role in his public life. “In order to make good political decisions, you need to have an ethical framework,” he says. “You need to have a set of values that guide you, especially in difficult decisions.”

Faith also helps him keep things in perspective. “In politics, ego is a big factor,” he says. “In my faith, and in my reading of what we’re called to do as people, it’s to not allow our ego to get in the way of our need to serve, to look out for the good of

Although [Charlie] Clark describes his faith as ‘a more private part of my life,’ he nevertheless sees it as playing a role in his public life.

humanity and also of our planet.”

Of his faith journey, Clark says, “It’s been a bit of a process, because I didn’t grow up Christian, and to this day I don’t know if I quite reconcile with naming myself as a Christian. I follow and find inspiration and guidance from many of the things Christ did and talked about, but there’s a lot of baggage that goes along with the term.”

In spite of that, he finds the Scriptures relevant to life in today’s world, and is challenged by Christ’s call to “make the world a better place for particularly those who are living on the margins.” ❧

'Thanks to God, I have a new house'

MCC partners rebuilding 15 homes following Ecuador earthquake

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Digna Macias remembers clinging to a door frame in her home in Manta, Ecuador, while the walls fell around her last April following a 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the Pacific coast of northern Ecuador, where she lives.

Fortunately, neither Macias, nor her daughter, Nidia Palma, who lives with her, were injured badly, but 668 died, more than 4,800 were injured and 80,000 people were displaced in the country.

"We got hit by bricks that fell on top of us, but thanks to God, it wasn't too serious," Macias said. "The house was completely demolished. I felt bad because I didn't have anywhere to live, but thankfully my daughter and I have been able to stay at my son's house temporarily."

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partnered with Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Ecuatoriana (IEME) churches in Manabi province to construct 15 earthquake-resistant homes for their most socio-economically vulnerable church members. Macias was one of the recipients of this assistance.

MCC sent Dave Shenk, a former Mennonite Mission Network worker in Ecuador, as a disaster response coordinator, who said he was shocked when he arrived a week after the earthquake hit: "It was like walking through a war zone in those really affected areas. Buildings were collapsed on top of each other. Police officers and soldiers were patrolling the streets, and other than that it was deserted. The earthquake itself was a horrific experience and very traumatic for people. There were also over 2,000 aftershocks registered."

"People who don't have support networks, a savings account and aren't able to stabilize themselves because they maybe

don't have a job to fall back on, continue to be in really precarious situations," he said. "We tried to implement better building techniques so that homes are stronger and families would feel safer there."

Macias and her daughter fit the criteria. The year before the earthquake, her home was damaged in two floods, according to Shenk. Bearing this in mind, a local civil engineer who attends an IEME congregation planned to build her house up to prevent future damage.

"Thanks to God, I have a new house," Macias said. "I feel very happy and thankful to all of you."

To date, IEME has fully completed five homes and is finishing work on three others of the 15 it has committed to rebuild. Some only require repairs, but many were demolished and need to be fully rebuilt. ❧

PHOTOS COURTESY OF IGLESIA EVANGÉLICA MENONITA ECUATORIANA



Digna Macias and her daughter, Nidia Palma, stand in front of their new earthquake- and flood-proof home, which was built by Iglesia Evangélica Menonita Ecuatoriana (IEME), a Mennonite Central Committee partner, after an earthquake struck the Pacific coast of northern Ecuador in April.

/// Briefly noted

MCC B.C. opens emergency weather shelter in Abbotsford

When Mennonite Central Committee B.C. was approached about turning its material resources warehouse in Abbotsford into an "extreme weather response" shelter, the immediate answer was yes. "We didn't have all the logistics figured out," said Jane Njogu, coordinator of MCC B.C.'s Homelessness Prevention and Outreach program, "but we knew this was something we wanted to do." Between November and April each year, B.C. Housing provides funding for temporary emergency shelters through its Extreme Weather Response program. The program provides mats for beds, and coffee and muffins for breakfast, but needs spaces for these shelters to be set up. There was an extreme weather advisory in effect for a week in mid-December 2016 in Abbotsford. Every night at 6 p.m., MCC opened its doors to 20 individuals on a first-come, first-served basis. With resources from MCC's material resources warehouse, the MCC Centre Thrift Shop and Common Place Cafe, men and women were able to access sleeping bags, blankets, winter gear, dry clothes, games, entertainment and a hot evening meal. "We've made room at the inn," said Njogu.

—Story and Photo by MCC B.C.



Jane Njogu, MCC B.C.'s homeless prevention and outreach coordinator, stands with a pile of handmade blankets that will be distributed to those using its 'extreme weather response' shelter in Abbotsford.

Egyptian radiologist seeks help for Salam Medical Centre

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
WATERLOO, ONT.

In an attempt to secure the future of the Salam Medical Centre, which he founded in a town some 25 kilometres north of Cairo, Egypt, Dr. Freddy Elbaiady, has embarked on a fundraising tour, taking him to the governments of Canada and the U.S., Switzerland and other Middle East countries, and to the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad

Grebel University College last month.

The radiologist takes a different approach to medicine. He uses it to bring peace to his divided country, an effort that brings Christians and Muslims together around a basic human need—the health of the body and mind.

He said the Egyptian centre is so well accepted by both religions that, during a

PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. FREDDY ELBAIADY



Dr. Freddy Elbaiady cares for a patient at Salam Medical Centre near Cairo, Egypt.

recent protest, several young Muslim men surrounded it to protect it from acts of violence. When asked about the cooperation of the different Christian groups, he said the Catholics offer the most services in the country, Protestant groups the next highest, and Coptic Christians the least.

The majority of the population, 90 percent of them Muslim, earn their livelihood from farming, or work as general labourers or as employees of various small businesses in the community. Unemployment, poverty and illiteracy are all significant problems in the area, and most people are not covered by any kind of insurance.

Elbaiady said that he and many health-care professionals volunteer their time in giving a range of services without government aid. Even though he is a member of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party, the centre receives no help from the government, which, in a struggling political system, has no funding for its indigent people.

He told the gathering at Grebel that the fundraising goal is to expand the centre's services to offer more education in the health field, including workshops and seminars to related health groups.

Elbaiady was asked by Nathan Funk, associate professor of peace and conflict studies, whether his centre could be used as a model in other Muslim-dominated countries. He responded, noting, "On a speaking engagement to Saudi Arabia, I was asked if this couldn't be a model to bring the Shia-Sunni factions together."

He also spent time with Paul Heidebrecht, director of the Centre for Peace Advancement, to explore ways that students could relate to the Salam Medical Centre with special study projects or cross-cultural experiences in the country. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Winnipeg church hosts afternoon of solidarity with Dakota Access protesters

Hundreds of concerned American citizens gathered peacefully to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline and pray on Nov 26, 2016. At the same time, dozens more gathered at Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg to add their voices. The pipeline raises major concerns for environmentalists and human rights activists. If completed, it will run through four states, the Missouri River, and sacred traditional lands belonging to North Dakota's Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, including ancient burial and prayer sites. Protests and legal battles have hampered the pipeline since its beginnings; nevertheless, it is nearly complete. Kelsey Wiebe, a local university student, was one of nearly 50 who gathered at Home Street to listen to a live audio feed of the American protest, and joined in with their half-hour of silent prayer. When the time came for silence, Wiebe said it felt powerful to be at one with so many others. "I came away feeling hopeful, just to recognize that there has been so much support for [Standing Rock] coming from here and all over North America as well." After prayer, organizers took up a collection that yielded more than \$700 that will go to the Oceti Sakowin water protection camp at Standing Rock.

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

PHOTO BY TIM NAFZIGER



MC U.S.A.'s logo flies alongside those of other organizations protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota.

Roots and routes

Blacks and Mennonites have been good neighbours in Saskatchewan

BY RUTH MARLENE FRIESEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
SASKATOON

A presentation by Timothy Epp on the enduring relationship between blacks and Mennonites quickly morphed into a time of sharing and storytelling by members of the two communities during this year's annual Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan "peace event," held on Nov. 12 at Saskatoon's Bethany Manor.

Epp, an associate professor of sociology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., has had his research featured in various publications, including a recent issue of the *Saskatchewan Mennonite Historian*. Born in Rosthern, Sask., Epp entitled his presentation, "Roots and routes: Blacks and Mennonites in Canada."

He began his talk by noting that Mennonites and blacks were neighbours in Germantown, Pa., as early as 1688, and some of those Pennsylvania Mennonites had helped blacks escape to Canada via the Underground Railroad in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He said that blacks had proved to be capable farmers among the Mennonite farmers of Upper Canada during that period.

At first, Epp thought this was a unique but small episode in Mennonite history, but then he made some connections to people from Saskatchewan, particularly Berny Wiens, who reported that he had grown up with blacks in the area around Herschel and Fiske. Wiens introduced Epp to his friends from the large, extended LaFayette clan. Then the contacts began to snowball. Even before the meeting, Epp met people who told him that they had also grown up with blacks in their communities at Aberdeen, Glenbush and Blaine Lake.

A good turnout of about 150 people listened intently to the stories Epp told in his presentation. When he finished, a panel of guests including Wiens, two LaFayette sisters, Carol and Vera, and their cousin Ruby.

Instead of just answering questions, however, this turned into an interesting storytelling session by the panellists and audience members.

Tina Siemens from Fiske recalled teaching seven of the LaFayette children in school and greeted them as good friends. A woman from Drake held up a small photo album that had been her mother's and included pictures from her mother's summers teaching Vacation Bible School in these communities and staying as a



PHOTO BY SUSAN BRAUN

Pictured, from left to right: Carol LaFayette, Vera LaFayette and Ruby LaFayette participate in a panel discussion at a 'peace event' hosted by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan on Nov. 12.

guest of Grandma Mayes, a well-known and loved midwife in the area.

As the afternoon wore on, the event felt like a family reunion. The historical society's board members, Dick Braun and Leonard Doell, let it go on longer than planned, inviting everyone to continue their visiting informally. ☼

/// Briefly noted

Kindred donates \$45,000 to five worthy causes

KITCHENER, ONT.—Over the course of December 2016, Kindred Credit Union donated:

- **\$10,000** to Canadian Foodgrains Bank to support efforts to end hunger around the world. The donation will be shared across 12 growing projects located throughout southwestern Ontario. The 12 projects sponsored by Kindred were selected by branch staff in Aylmer, Elmira, Leamington, Milverton and Mount Forest.
- **\$15,000** to support the efforts of two organizations working to welcome refugee newcomers to Waterloo Region. Reception House's Family Partnership Program and Welcome Home Refugee House, now part of Ray of Hope, have each received \$7,500 grants to advance their important work. Reception House's Family Partnership program connects newcomer families with local families or community groups for one year. Welcome Home Refugee House provides refugee new arrivals a year's housing, together with emotional and spiritual support, church and community connections, and skills that foster a healthy and productive life.
- **\$20,000** to support the efforts of two organizations in Elmira, Ont., working to increase the availability of supportive and affordable housing. Elmira District Community Living (EDCL) and MennoHomes have each received \$10,000 grants to advance their respective building projects. EDCL's Field of Dreams campaign is building inclusive housing for adults with intellectual disabilities to live more independently. MennoHomes is filling a gap in affordable housing with a new 25-unit apartment building in Elmira.

"At Kindred Credit Union we seek to live out our purpose every day. One of the most tangible ways we do that is through our support of community partners who share our values," said chief executive officer Brent Zorgdrager of the donations.

—Kindred Credit Union

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

Mennonite missionary served with hands-on attitude

Ken Schwartzentruber

April 30, 1928 – Nov. 17, 2016

BY DEBORAH FROESE AND KELSEY HOCHSTETLER

Mennonite Church Canada / Mennonite Mission Network

From seafaring cowboy to Christian book publisher, Ken Schwartzentruber embraced life and adventure with a hands-on attitude and a commitment to God. Born to the late Allen and Elizabeth (Wagler) Schwartzentruber in Petersburg, Ont., on April 30, 1928, his light flickered out on Nov. 17, 2016, in New Hamburg, Ont., at the age of 88, with his family by his side.

Before he died, a photographer captured images of Ken's thin, fragile hands resting on a blanket, touched by the hands of his family members. For them, the images are symbolic.

"Over the years Daddy's hands carried out—in very practical terms—the work of God in the places where he lived and served," daughter Michele Rae Rizoli of Toronto stated in the family's funeral tribute.

Ken learned to work with his hands on the family farm near Petersburg, and, like many young Mennonites in their community, left

school after completing Grade 8 to help out. Ready for a new adventure by the age of 17, he put his "cowboy" skills to work aboard a ship transporting farm animals to post-Second World War Europe. The trip sparked his desire to explore the world and to become involved in mission work.

Upon returning to Canada, Ken began dating Grace Bender and discovered that she shared those desires. They married in 1952, and Ken began preparing for ministry. He and Grace moved to the U.S. for post-secondary studies at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va., and Goshen (Ind.) Biblical Seminary. After graduation, the Schwartzentrubers returned to Ontario, where Ken served as a part-time pastor and held a few other jobs to put food on the table, including one at a Christian bookstore in London, an experience that prepared him for his role in Brazil.

Ken and Grace, who predeceased him on March 9, 2005, served with the Mennonite Board of Missions (now Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network) in Brazil from 1961 until retiring in 1993. In addition to serving a local congregation with Grace, Ken managed four bookstores in the Livraria Cristã Unida (United Christian Bookstore) chain and launched a publishing company that breathed life into more than 30 books.

With three young daughters in tow and another baby on the way, the Schwartzentrubers couldn't have arrived in Brazil at better time. In 1962, a year after their arrival, Pope John XXIII introduced reforms to create more openness in the church. To feed a growing hunger for theology among the populace, the bookstores offered a wide selection of resources from many denominational publishers.

During their 32 years in Brazil, the Schwartzentrubers became good friends with Otis and Betty Hochstetler, who also ran bookstores through Mennonite Board of Missions.

"Ken was a dear friend who loved the church, his family, and reflected this in his way of working in the bookstores and with

WATERLOO REGION RECORD FILE PHOTO



A man committed to avoiding waste, Ken Schwartzentruber salvaged copper from discarded appliances at Mennonite Central Committee's New Hamburg Thrift Centre, where he volunteered after his retirement in 1993.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GINNY HOSTETLER



With his hands-on approach, Ken Schwartzentruber kept an old Volkswagen van in good running order to transport goods for the bookstores he managed and for use as a family vehicle. He is pictured with two of his four children, K. Daniel and Michele.

people,” Otis wrote in an email. “Ken had the gift of knowing what and how much to have in stock for the needs of the Christian community and beyond.”

Ken empowered others to use their gifts, too. In the early years, he trained male employees for bookstore ministry, only to see them leave to become pastors. Although that might have indicated the impact of Christian literature, it frustrated him. He changed his approach. He began hiring and training women because he knew they would stick around, since women were not

permitted to become pastors at that time.

Keeping the shelves stocked permitted Ken to indulge in his love of travel and his hands-on approach to life. He frequently bussed to the large city of São Paulo to personally select books from publishing houses for his stores. At other times, he used the family’s well-used, second-hand Volkswagen van to transport goods like church pump organs and books. He repaired and maintained the van to meet family needs, too, once adding a platform over the rear seats to create a camping van.

Ken’s passion for ministry, and his inclination to work with his hands, continued after retirement. He spent many hours volunteering at Mennonite Central Committee’s New Hamburg Thrift Centre.

After Grace’s death and a period of loneliness, he met and married Robena Gerber nine years ago.

When he was once asked what he would do differently if he knew his life was almost over, Ken replied, “I wouldn’t do anything differently because every day I try to live the way God wants me to live.” ✎

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ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

More-with-Less cookbook gets a new look

More-with-Less: 40th Anniversary Edition. Doris Janzen Longacre and Rachel Marie Stone.
Herald Press and Mennonite Central Committee, 2016, 320 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

The 40th-anniversary edition of the *More-with-Less* cookbook, with its many full-page photographs, has an updated and more sophisticated look. Rather than simple black-and-white pages, it has moved to a full-colour format, designed to appeal to the eye. Although most of the recipes are the same, the layout has been reorganized, and the tips for eating in a healthy and eco-friendly way have been shortened and streamlined. I wonder how much our homes and churches have also moved from basic and practical to more decorative in the last 40 years.

Flipping through this new edition, one of the first things you notice is that the contributors are no longer listed on the recipe pages, and the little anecdotes and suggestions that are sprinkled throughout the original 1976 version and the 25th-anniversary edition are no longer there. The contributors have been put into a list and moved to the back of the book. This makes sense if the new cookbook is designed to appeal to those outside traditional Mennonite communities. Back in the 1970s, cooks would have recognized some of the names, perhaps even those from abroad, such as Viola Dorsch of Tanzania (soda cracker recipe), or Herta Janzen of India (Indian dessert yogurt).

The order of the chapters has also changed. Rather than beginning with yeast breads, the new version has bread recipes toward the back, just before desserts. Meanwhile, salads and soups were moved up to the second and third spots,

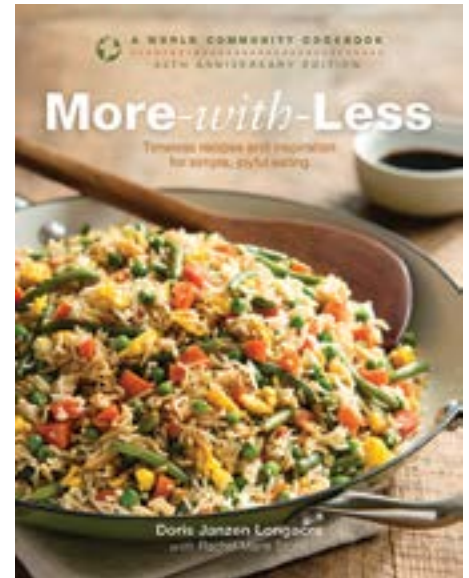
right after snacks and starters. Perhaps these changes reflect that homemade breads and muffins have moved from everyday to occasional fare, while hummus and other dips have moved in the other direction.

I found it interesting that all recipes calling for shortening or margarine have been revised, asking for butter instead. It's amazing how things change. In the 1980s and '90s, butter was regarded as dangerous, but today it is margarine and shortening that are in disfavour. Another change is that, rather than deep-fried

french fries, the recipe calls for the potato strips to be roasted in a bit of oil.

It's also interesting that recipes calling for flavoured gelatin have been scrapped. I wonder if this is because jellied salads have fallen out of favour, or to avoid pre-packaged ingredients. Other recipes that no longer appear are some of the many soybean dishes, instructions for a large-scale master baking mix, and homemade soap.

Several of the new recipes are vegetarian, including lentil burgers, baked tofu, hummus and falafel. A few names for things have been changed. Modern cooks might not know where to access dry-curd cottage cheese, so the revised recipe calls



for farmer cheese or *queso blanco*. I was interested to learn that another name for ground wheat is bulgur.

A few of the recipe titles have been changed. For example, poor man's soup was changed to beef and bean soup, and Grandmother's Russian pancakes to Russian crepes. Meanwhile, baked fish has been labelled baked fish béchamel. I was glad to see that the folksy title

A few of the recipe titles have been changed. For example, poor man's soup was changed to beef and bean soup, and Grandmother's Russian pancakes to Russian crepes.

“Martin stew” remained, along with the explanation of how it got that name.

The *More-with-Less* cookbook remains a classic, with healthy recipes that call for basic ingredients. It is a trusted go-to book for everyday fare that can be made economically with world justice in mind. The improvement I appreciate most in this new edition is that chapter headings are printed on each page so that I can quickly find recipes without using the index.

My original *More-with-Less* cookbook is extremely worn and spattered because I have used it so often. Hopefully, a new generation will find the 40th-anniversary version equally appealing and useful. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Mennonite academic launches new book on theology and popular literature

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) professor Paul Doerksen launched a new collection of essays, *Take and Read: Reflecting Theologically on Books*, at McNally-Robinson Booksellers in Winnipeg on Dec. 4, 2016. Officially associate professor of theology and Anabaptist studies, Doerksen's vibrant interdisciplinary work has made him something of an "honorary member" in CMU's English department. Still it was not his academic work that inspired *Take and Read*, but a theological book-discussion group of the same name that Doerksen has hosted now for 12 years. Open to all regardless of age, background or occupation, the conversations of this diversified group have been highly productive for Doerksen. Minding its origins both in style and accessibility, *Take and Read* works through the theology inherent in various works of popular literature, including fiction and non-fiction, addressing salient contemporary topics such as food security, violence, dementia and indigenous issues. In his introduction, Doerksen writes, "I am keenly aware that in this context I am not writing reviews for an academic journal. . . . Many of these essays have what may feel like a decidedly inconclusive or even unfinished quality to them. . . . Insofar as that is the case, they have that quality precisely because they were intended to open discussion."

—STORY AND PHOTO
BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY



Paul Doerksen reads from his new book, *Take and Read*, at a Dec. 4 book launch in Winnipeg.



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Mission worker befriended Jews and Palestinians

Florence Cressman Kreider served in Israel for 32 years, and she sought to spread peace wherever she travelled.

canadianmennonite.org/friend-jews-palestinians



The refugee highway in Kitchener-Waterloo

Three Mennonite organizations are supporting refugees in one Ontario community. Here are some of the practical things they are doing.

canadianmennonite.org/refugee-highway



Film on COs wins awards and attention

In *The Last Objectors* Second-World-War conscientious objectors describe the faith that drove them to refuse arms and the resistance they faced for this choice.

canadianmennonite.org/film-objectors



The danger isn't over

Responding to flooding along Colombia's Pacific coast, MCC works with a local Mennonite Brethren church to help 500 families in 11 rural communities.

canadianmennonite.org/colombia-flood

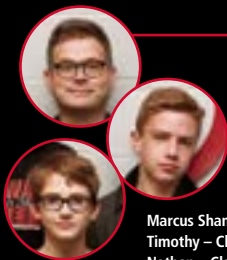


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VIEWPOINT

‘We must act and we must do it now’

Eight steps you can take to work for positive change in the world

BRANDI FRIESEN THORPE

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

PHOTOS BY BRANDI FRIESEN THORPE



Our faith calls us to work for justice, writes Brandi Friesen Thorpe, pictured at right with Minnesota-based Black Lives Matter activist Kendrick Hall.



Joining protests and demonstrations makes a difference, according to Brandi Friesen Thorpe. The more creative and peaceful, the greater the impact.

This is a critical time in the world. From environmental threats like the Kinder Morgan pipeline, to the troubling rhetoric coming out of the United States after Donald Trump’s presidential win, many people are wondering: How can I make a difference and work for positive change?

More than ever, we are in need of brave people to step into the world and be the church, the body of people who show deep love to the world. We are needed to love, to make space for just revolution where settler and indigenous, man and woman, straight and gay, are all invited to the table. There is no future unless we are all invited to it.

Here are some steps to take and some questions to ask:

1. LEARN FROM young indigenous voices. Read the words of young indigenous writers and speakers. These will be the leaders of the future we will need to support, encourage and be in relationship with. Go to their speaking events. Find out what they are pursuing justice for. Join them. We cannot make a difference in the world if we only surround ourselves with sameness. We need difference to teach us what sameness cannot. Don’t know where to start? Try Erica Violet Lee, a Nēhiyah philosopher from Saskatoon; Michael Champagne, the Cree founder of Meet Me at the

Belltower in Winnipeg; Eriel Deranger, a Dene eco-warrior who defends traditional lands from oil development; and *Red Rising Magazine*, a new publication based in Winnipeg that features the voices of young indigenous people.

2. ASK QUESTIONS. It is not always about the answers, but rather about finding the right questions, as these will create the needed responses. Find the points of resistance in yourself and your community, and examine why they exist. Are they for the right reasons? What do your beliefs require of you to be faithful in your social and political spaces?

3. BE AN ally and an accomplice (visit bit.ly/ally-or-accomplice). Consider your position: Are you an ally supporting the voices of the marginalized? Are you an accomplice taking steps with your life to offer support? Are you willing to change how you live out community and how you pray? If you want to answer the call to justice, you must be willing to be both an ally and an accomplice.

4. PARTICIPATE. CHRISTIAN Peacemaker Teams has a team in Canada doing indigenous solidarity work. The Student Christian Movement has a chapter in Canada as well. Join them, support them, listen to them. If you’re just starting out, these are great places to learn and engage around issues. Support in any form will be welcomed.

5. SIGN PETITIONS. Do they matter?

Yes. They don't always change an issue, but they do communicate the rising consciousness and will of the people. Petitions gather solidarity, promote movement and are encouragements to those engaged in deep parts of the struggle.

6. CONTACT THOSE who represent you. Whether it is your pastor, MP or prime minister, it matters that these leaders hear from their people. How else will they know that the people care? You can be an advocate. It is as simple as writing an email.

7. CREATE SPACE during worship. Does your Sunday morning service have a moment to remember the struggles and celebrations of the land you live on? Consider introducing a moment in your worship or prayers that acknowledges the land you live on, its living history and the struggles that prevail. If you can express concern for the impacts of Kinder Morgan pipelines at home, there is certainly space for this concern in your communal prayers.

8. JOIN PROTESTS and demonstrations. Show up! Be present at protests that protect the dignity of humans and the earth. Be with the people and be a presence of peace in the streets. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. spent time training people to peacefully protest and to be resistant

love in oppressive places, to great effect. The more creative and peaceful the presence, the greater the impact. We need to be in these critical spaces.

It is important to step into the community and do the work of justice our faith calls for. This can only be done if it is matched with the work of addressing yourself: your fears, prejudices, relationships and your ways of thinking. These are the only ways to approach reconciling a relationship with those our colonial histories have made into "others." These are the only ways we can imagine and accomplish a vision of a peaceable and just future.

The stress of the times gives us an opportunity to grow, rise together and do better. I have seen you, young dreamers, prophets and people of hope. We are capable of meeting these challenges, but there is no time to waste. We must grow, we must act and we must do it now. ✎

Brandi Friesen Thorpe, 27, attends Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. She is a graduate student at the University of Manitoba and sits on the board of the World Student Christian Federation, a global social justice organization empowering students around the world.



The stress of the times gives us an opportunity to grow, says Brandi Friesen Thorpe. We are capable of meeting these challenges.

Caring for the forgotten

Every day at the hospital is different for spiritual health practitioner Jared Redekop

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Jared Redekop has seen and done a lot in just over a year of working as a spiritual health practitioner at the Children's Hospital of Winnipeg.

One experience that most sticks out is when a family asked him to say a prayer at their teenage daughter's interment. He had journeyed with the family, which was not religious, for the six weeks from when their 14-year-old was in an automobile accident to when she died.

"I have a special spot in my heart for that

family," he says. "I'm grateful that they allowed me into their lives."

Redekop, 30, has worked at the Children's Hospital since October 2015. As a spiritual health practitioner, he is there to support families both emotionally and spiritually. He's there to listen, to pray with people or just to sit with them.

The Children's Hospital is located on the campus of the Health Sciences Centre, the largest healthcare centre in Manitoba.

(Continued on page 30)



Jared Redekop provides spiritual care to patients and families at the Children's Hospital of Winnipeg.



Working in a multicultural, multifaith environment has shaped Jared Redekop's beliefs.

(Continued from page 29)

Redekop, who attends Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, is part of a team of 10 spiritual health practitioners who work with patients and families from all faith backgrounds or those with no faith background.

Redekop recently led a smudge, an indigenous practice that involves purifying a room with the smoke of sacred herbs, for an indigenous family. Usually, Redekop would defer to an indigenous elder or family member to do a smudge, but since no one was available, he was happy to step in. "Some think a white person shouldn't

Eventually, Redekop returned to CMU, where he completed a degree in social science. At the same time, he began working half-time at Home Street Mennonite Church as the youth pastor. During his two years in that role, a teenager from the church was diagnosed with cancer. He recalls visiting the girl and her family in the hospital. He found doing pastoral care work in that setting particularly meaningful.

After finishing his work at Home Street, Redekop entered the clinical pastoral education (CPE) program offered through the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care. He began working at the Children's

'That's really what brought me to faith . . . having that community support of Floradale Mennonite Church and the examples that came from the community.'
(Jared Redekop)

be leading smudges, but if it's patient-care-centred, and it's what they need in that time, I'll do it," he says.

Providing people with spiritual care runs in Redekop's family. He grew up in Floradale, Ont., where his father Fred served as lead pastor at Floradale Mennonite Church for a quarter-century.

"That's really what brought me to faith . . . having that community support of Floradale Mennonite Church and the examples that came from the community," he says. "People were always volunteering, always serving, always giving of themselves."

Redekop began his post-secondary education at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, studying international development. After two years, he grew tired of sitting in the classroom. "I needed to get my feet wet to see if international development work was something I actually wanted to do," he says.

He travelled to the Philippines for six weeks, where he worked with a Christian ministry that serves the urban poor. This was followed by a six-week stint working in an orphanage in Ukraine, and one month working with Mennonite Disaster Service in Anahuac, Tex. A few months after that, he returned to the Philippines for a year, working with the same ministry he had served with earlier.

Hospital after completing his first unit of training. Today, he works at the hospital four days a week, using the remaining time to pursue his studies.

"I really like the hospital because every day is different," he says.

Working in a multicultural, multifaith environment has shaped his faith journey. "Growing up, everything was very black and white," he says. Christianity was the one true faith, Jesus was the only way to God, and anyone who believed otherwise would go to hell.

As a result of his CPE training, and reading the works of Franciscan friar Richard Rohr, many of those beliefs have changed. "I would steal Rohr's language and say I am more of a Christ-following mystic, rather than a Christian, knowing there are truths within Buddhism, within Islam, within Judaism, within traditional/indigenous faith," Redekop says, adding, "Christianity doesn't have a monopoly on the truth."

At the same time, he still identifies as Mennonite. It's growing up in the Mennonite church that taught him to care for those on the outskirts. "A lot of people, unfortunately, get forgotten at the hospital. They rarely get visitors," he says. "That's what pulled me into this work. It's a pull that I've felt all my life to help the marginalized, the people who are forgotten." ❧

Calendar

British Columbia

Jan. 21: A second congregational gathering to continue to listen to viewpoints on the Being a Faithful Church 7 decision, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Feb. 24: LEAD conference, at Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

Feb. 25: MC B.C. annual gathering, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

Alberta

Jan. 13-15: Junior-high snow camp, at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley. For more information, call 403-637-2510 or email valaqua@xplor.net.com.

Feb. 24-26: Senior-high snow camp, at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley. For more information, call 403-637-2510 or email valaqua@xplor.net.com.

March 17-18: MC Alberta annual general meeting and assembly, at Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 13-14: RJC alumni tournament of memories.

Jan. 27-29: Senior-high retreat, "The road less travelled," with Amy Peters, for youths in grades 9 to 12; at Camp Kadesh, Christopher Lake. For more information, visit smyo.ca.

Feb. 11: Mega Menno Valentine's Day event for youths in grade 6 to 12; at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon; at 7 p.m.

Manitoba

Until Jan. 29: "Along the Road to Freedom: Mennonite women of courage and faith" exhibition at the Manitoba Legislative Building, Winnipeg, featuring 26 paintings by Winnipeg artist Ray Dirks.

Jan. 28 & Feb. 4: A two-day, two-part Celtic Christian spirituality retreat in Winnipeg, exploring gifts of the Celts with stories, reflection and inspiration. For more information, call 204-489-7016 or visit ButterflyJourneys.webs.com.

Feb. 2-3: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents three one-act plays by its junior-high students, at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, Winnipeg.

Feb. 8: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Feb. 3: Bechtel Lecture with Kenneth Nafziger, choral conductor and hymnody expert. Topic: "Melting the boundaries of our being: Explorations in singing together." Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, Waterloo;

at 7 p.m. For more information, visit grebel.ca/bechtel.

Feb. 4: Song leaders workshop with Kenneth Nafziger, Bechtel lecturer, choral conductor and hymnody expert; at the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo; at 1:30 p.m. For more information, email melodie.sherk@uwaterloo.ca.

Feb. 5: Community hymn sing with Kenneth Nafziger, Bechtel lecturer, choral conductor and hymnody expert; at the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo; at 2 p.m. For more information, visit grebel.ca/bechtel.


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GRACE MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO / TEXT BY BRENDA PENNER



*Twenty-eight women—and one content baby to cuddle, not pictured—from Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, Man., gathered together for a retreat at Camp Assiniboia over three days at the end of last October. Kathy Giesbrecht from Mennonite Church Manitoba directed the reflections that were loosely based on Lauren F. Winner's book *Wearing God*. Participants came away with an enlarged image of who God is: nursing, nurturing mother; caring companion; friend; 'I've got your back' coach; and encourager. The weekend combined hugs, laughter, tears, walks, games, singing, puzzling, delicious food and pumpkin carving, among other activities.*

God at work in the Church Snapshots

PHOTO COURTESY OF YMCA SASKATOON



*On Nov. 22, 2016, the Saskatoon YMCA recognized participants from the documentary film, *Reserve 107: Reconciliation on the Prairies*, for their commitment to building peace within their community, as part of a Canada-wide celebration. Accepting the award on behalf of the film are, from left to right: Gary Laplante; Sylvia Weenie; Jason Johnson; Barb Froese; Wilmer Froese; Dean Dodge, Saskatoon YMCA's chief executive officer; Ray Funk; and George Kingfisher. To view the film, which documents the efforts of Mennonites, Lutherans and the Young Chippewyan First Nation to right land claim injustices on Treaty 6 land around Laird, Sask., visit reserve107thefilm.com.*

